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TOP SECRET

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FM THE SITUATION ROOM
TO RODMAN/LORD FOR DR KISSINGER ABOARD 56971
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CONTAINS CODEWORD

AUGUST 19, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER

SUBJECT: THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

ARMY review(s) completed.

COMBAT ACTIVITY DECREASED IN NORTHERN MILITARY REGION 1 YESTERDAY WITH ONLY 400 ROUNDS OF ARTILLERY FIRE REPORTED AGAINST SOUTH VIETNAMESE MARINE POSITIONS IN AND AROUND QUANG TRI CITY. HEAVIER FIGHTING WAS REPORTED IN THE 1ST ARVN DIVISION AREA AND AT FIRE SUPPORT BASE ROSS IN QUANG NAM PROVINCE. ROSS WAS PARTIALLY OVERRUN YESTERDAY BUT WAS RETAKEN AFTER HEAVY FIGHTING TODAY. THE ENEMY LOST SOME 159 KILLED IN THE ACTION WHILE ARVN LOST 22 KILLED AND 136 WOUNDED. ENEMY SAPPERS PENETRATED THE QUE SON DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS NEAR FIRE SUPPORT BASE ROSS AND DE- STROYED SIX 105TMM HOWITZERS.

OSD review completed

NO SIGNIFICANT CONTACTS WERE REPORTED IN MILITARY REGION 2. THE TWO-BATTALION ARVN OPERATION ALONG ROUTE 509 CONTINUES WITH NO ENEMY RESISTANCE ENCOUNTERED.

NSA review completed

ELEMENTS OF THE 9TH VC DIVISION AND THE 69TH ARTILLERY COMMAND CONTINUE TO HAMPER ARVN ADVANCEMENT FROM AN LOC TOWARD QUAN LOI. A REGIMENT OF THE 18TH ARVN DIVISION WAS IN CONTACT MOST OF YESTERDAY ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF QUAN LOI AND REPORTED KILLING 21 ENEMY.

MORI/CDF C03353124

ACTIVITY IN MILITARY REGION 4 IS DESCRIBED AS MODERATE ON 18-19 AUGUST. IN CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONS INTO CAMBODIA, 56 ENEMY WERE KILLED NEAR KAMPONG TRABEK.

A TOTAL OF 695 U.S. TACTICAL AIR SORTIES WERE FLOWN ON 19 AUGUST OF WHICH 371 WERE FLOWN OVER NORTH VIETNAM. IN ADDITION, 17 B-52 STRIKES WERE FLOWN OVER NORTH VIETNAM.

MILITARY REGION 1

BOTH ENEMY ARTILLERY AND GROUND ATTACKS WERE LIGHT YESTERDAY IN THE QUANG TRI CITY AREA AS THE ENEMY POSITIONS HIS FORCES FOR RENEWED ACTION.

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TOP SECRET

-= ONLY 400 ROUNDS OF INCOMING FIRE WERE REPORTED ON 18 AUGUST BY SOUTH VIETNAMESE MARINES.

-= IN THE QUANG TRI CITADEL, 11 ENEMY WERE KILLED YESTERDAY.

-= ARVN ARTILLERY REPORTEDLY DESTROYED TWO NVA TANKS JUST NORTH OF QUANG TRI CITY.

-= A SHIFT IN ARVN TROOP DISPOSITION OCCURRED ON AUGUST 16. THE 6TH MARINE BATTALION MOVED THROUGH THE 5TH MARINE BATTALION AND IS EXPECTED TO LINK-UP WITH FRIENDLY ELEMENTS ALONG THE THACH HAN RIVER SOUTH OF THE CITY. THE 9TH MARINE BATTALION REACHED THE SOUTHEAST BANK OF THE RIVER SOUTH OF THE CITADEL AND THE 8TH BATTALION HAS MOVED INTO POSITIONS NORTH OF THE CITY. AS A RESULT OF THESE MOVES, THE CITADEL WILL BE SURROUNDED BY ARVN ON THREE SIDES, WITH ONLY THE THACH HAN RIVER AND WEST SIDE UNDER ENEMY CONTROL.

-= IN THE AIRBORNE DIVISION AREA OF OPERATIONS ONLY LIGHT CONTACTS WERE REPORTED FOLLOWING YESTERDAY'S HEAVY FIGHTING AGAINST ENEMY INFANTRY AND ARMOR ATTACKS.

-= IN THE 1ST ARVN DIVISION AREA, COMBAT ACTIVITY WAS CHARACTERIZED BY INDIRECT FIRE AND A GROUND ASSAULT AGAINST FIRE SUPPORT BASE KING, SOUTHWEST OF HUE, FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE DAY. FRIENDLY ELEMENTS REPELLED THE ATTACKS. CUMULATIVE RESULTS OF THIS ACTION WERE 57 ENEMY KILLED, TWO DETAINED, AND ASSORTED ROCKET AND MORTAR AMMUNITION SEIZED. ARVN LOSSES WERE TWO KILLED AND 39 WOUNDED.

-= IN SOUTHERN MILITARY REGION 1, THE TEMPO OF COMBAT ACTIVITY INCREASED NEAR FIRE SUPPORT BASE ROSS WHILE NUMEROUS ENEMY INITIATED ACTIONS OCCURRED ELSEWHERE THROUGHOUT THE QUE SON VALLEY.

-= ELEMENTS OF THE NVA 711TH DIVISION PENETRATED THE FIRE SUPPORT BASE ROSS PERIMETER ON AUGUST 18 AND AT ONE TIME OCCUPIED TWO-THIRDS OF THE BASE. ARVN DEFENSES HELD LAST NIGHT AND WITH TACTICAL AIR SUPPORT REOCCUPIED THE ENTIRE BASE THIS MORNING. ARVN LOST 22 KILLED, 136 WOUNDED AND HAD THREE HOWITZERS DESTROYED. THE ENEMY LOST 159 KILLED.

-= DEVELOPMENTS IN QUANG NAM AND QUANG TIN PROVINCES ON AUGUST 17 AND 18 INDICATE THAT A COORDINATED ENEMY ATTACK IS UNDER WAY. IN ADDITION TO YESTERDAY'S ATTACK ON DA NANG AIRBASE, FIRE SUPPORT BASE BALDY IN QUE SON DISTRICT RECEIVED

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INDIRECT FIRE, INCLUDING 130-MM ARTILLERY. AT THE SAME TIME IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE, TAM KY CITY WAS HIT BY ARTILLERY FIRE THAT KILLED TWO CIVILIANS AND WOUNDED FIVE. WHILE FIRE SUPPORT BASE HAWK HILL 6 MILES NORTH OF TAM KY, TOOK A TOTAL OF 18 122-MM ROCKETS IN TWO ATTACKS AND LY TIN DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS TOOK 20. THE ENEMY MADE A SERIES OF GROUND ATTACKS ON TERRITORIAL OUTPOSTS IN THANG BINH AND TAM KY DISTRICTS. ROUTE 534 WAS INTERDICTED NEAR BINH TRI VILLAGE, THANG BINH DISTRICT.

-- IN ADDITION, AN AMMUNITION STORAGE AREA AT QUE SON DISTRICT TOWN WAS HIT BY AN ENEMY SHELL WHICH DETONATED STORED CS GAS ROUNDS. THE TOWN HAD TO BE EVACUATED BUT IT WAS REENTERED TODAY.

-- ENEMY SAPPERS DESTROYED SIX HOWITZERS AT QUE SON DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS YESTERDAY.

MILITARY REGION 2

A LOW LEVEL OF ACTIVITY WAS REPORTED THROUGHOUT THE REGION.

-- THE ARVN SEARCH OPERATION SOUTHWEST OF PLEIKU PROGRESSES SLOWLY WITH NO COMBAT ACTIVITY REPORTED, WHILE TO THE EAST ALONG THE COASTAL PLAIN OF BINH DINH PROVINCE, THE MULTI-BATTALION OPERATION WEST OF TAM QUAN HAS NOT PRODUCED ANY SIGNIFICANT ACTION.

-- THREE SMALL CONTACTS WERE REPORTED IN DARLAC PROVINCE BY TERRITORIAL FORCE.

MILITARY REGION 3

ENEMY UNITS FROM THE 9TH VC DIVISION AND THE 69TH ARTILLERY COMMAND CONTINUE THEIR EFFORTS TO PREVENT ARVN FORCES FROM ADVANCING FROM AN LOC TO QUAN LOI.

-- A REGIMENT FROM THE ARVN 18TH DIVISION REPORTED KILLING 21 ENEMY OUTSIDE QUAN LOI YESTERDAY.

-- REGIONAL FORCES ON A SEARCH OPERATION IN SOUTHERN HAU NGHIA PROVINCE DISCOVERED A 50-BED HOSPITAL AND A QUANTITY OF ASSORTED ROCKET AND MORTAR AMMUNITION. A SMALL CLASH WITH ENEMY FORCES FOLLOWED AND TWO ENEMY SOLDIERS WERE KILLED, AND 12 WERE DETAINED.

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-- IN THE SAME AREA AN ENEMY MUNITIONS CACHE WAS ALSO DISCOVERED CONTAINING OVER 400 ROCKET AND MORTAR ROUNDS, ANTI-TANK MINES, SOME 300 HAND GRENADES AND OVER 33,000 ROUNDS OF SMALL-ARMS AMMUNITION. THERE WERE NO FRIENDLY LOSSES.

MILITARY REGION 4

COMBAT ACTIVITY WAS AT A MODERATE LEVEL YESTERDAY.

-- THE 18B NVA REGIMENT HAS MOVED TO THE VICINITY OF KIEN BINH DISTRICT TOWN. IN ADDITION, THE 95TH NVA REGIMENT HAS DEPLOYED TO THE VICINITY OF ROUTE 12, APPROXIMATELY 8 MILES SOUTH OF THE 18B. A RALLIER REPORTED THAT ELEMENTS OF THE D2 VC REGIMENT HAVE ALSO RELOCATED TO THE SAME GENERAL AREA. THESE DEPLOYMENTS MAY PRESAGE ENEMY INITIATED ACTIVITY THAT COULD COINCIDE WITH AN UPSURGE OF ACTIVITY IN NORTHERN MR-4.

-- COMBAT ACTIVITY CONTINUES TO BE CENTERED IN DINH TUONG PROVINCE. 174:)8&#5 548(5 -!197,536 194 49 ENEMY DEAD IN AN AREA SEARCHED YESTERDAY IN DINH TKHNG PROVINCE BY ARVN 15TH REGIMENT ELEMENTS.

-- IN CROSS BORDER OPERATIONS, ONE SIGNIFICANT COMBAT ACTION NEAR KAMPONG TRABECK RESULTED IN 27 ENEMY KILLED. THERE WERE NO ARVN CASUALTIES. ALSO, A RANGER BATTALION WAS AIR ASSAULTED IN THE AREA ON AUGUST 17 TO EXPAND THE SEARCH AND CLEAR OPERATION.

LAOS

-- VANG PAO'S FORCES MOVING TOWARD THE PLAINE DES JARRES HAVE YET TO ENCOUNTER MUCH RESISTANCE. THREE IRREGULAR BATTALIONS HAVE MOVED ABOUT 7 MILES FROM THEIR STARTIG POINT AT THAN HEUP TO A HILL NEAR THE WESTERN EDGE OF THE PLAINE. THREE OTHER BATTALIONS PUSHING TOWARD THE PLAINE FROM THE SOUTHEAST ON AUGUST 17 ENGAGED IN SEVERAL BRIEF CLASHES WITH SMALL NVN UNITS, BUT SUFFERED ONLY ONE WOUNDED.

CAMBODIA

-- COMMUNICATIONS INTELLIGENCE INDICATES THAT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMUNIST 5TH DIVISION WAS NORTHEAST OF ROUTE 1 AND KAMPONG TRABEK ON AUGUST 16. THE HEADQUARTERS IS PROBABLY DIRECTING THE NEARBY 174TH REGIMENT, WHICH IS OPPOSING FANK/ARVN FORCES TRYING TO REACH KAMPONG TRABEK. WELL-ENTRENCHED ENEMY TROOPS ON ROUTE 1

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CONTINUE TO BLOCK THE ADVANCE OF THE COMBINED TASK FORCE, WHICH APPARENTLY IS STILL COUNTING ON AIR STRIKES TO CLEAR THE WAY TO KOMPONG TRABEK.

IN THE NORTHWEST, THE MILITARY SITUATION AROUND SIEM REAP TOWN REMAINS GENERALLY QUIET. A MEMBER OF THE CAMBODIAN GENERAL STAFF HAS INDICATED THAT GOVERNMENT DEFENSIVE POSITIONS AROUND THE TOWN ARE TO BE STRENGTHENED, AND THAT THREE BATTALIONS FROM THE ADJACENT PROVINCE OF BATTAMBANG WILL BE DIRECTED TO REOPEN ROUTE 6, WEST OF SIEM REAP.

U.S. AIR AND NAVAL OPERATIONS

THE FOLLOWING AIR SORTIES WERE FLOWN TODAY:

	MR-1	MR-2	MR-3	MR-4	NVN	TOTAL
TACAIR US	190	32	54	48	371	695
TACAIR VNAF	43	18	62	58	0	181
B-52	56	0	8	14	17	99

THERE WERE 4 B-52 SORTIES FLOWN IN CAMBODIA.

-- SCHEDULED TARGETS LAST NIGHT OVER NORTH VIETNAM IN THE HANOI AREA INCLUDED THE THO KHOI, BAC GIANG AND VU CHUA RAILROAD BRIDGES PLUS THE YEN BAI RAILROAD YARD AND THE THAI GIEN OPEN STORAGE AREA.

-- IN THE HAIPHONG AREA SCHEDULED TARGETS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING: HOANH MA RAILROAD BRIDGE, NHUY THUONG POL STORAGE AREA, BI GIANG RAILROAD SIDING, HON GAI STORAGE, BARRACKS AND HIGHWAY FERRY, HAI DUONG HIGHWAY FERRY AND STORAGE AREA PLUS THE PHU XUYEN HIGHWAY PONTOON BRIDGE.

-- THE CAU DONG HIGHWAY BRIDGE IS ONE TARGET IN THE THANH HOA AREA WHILE AT VINH THE TAM XUAM THUONG, NINH XA AND XIM NAC HIGHWAY BRIDGES ARE SCHEDULED.

-- NO RESULTS FROM ANY OF THESE SCHEDULED TARGETS ARE AS YET AVAILABLE.

-- UPDATES TO AIR STRIKES FLOWN OVER NORTH VIETNAM ON AUGUST 18 NOW SHOW THE FOLLOWING RESULTS: IN THE VINH AREA THE

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THON SON HIGHWAY FERRY AND THE HA TINH HIGHWAY FERRY SITES WERE SEEDED WITH 34 MK-36S. IN ADDITION, THE THON SON HIGHWAY BRIDGE #2 APPROACHES WERE CRATERED. ALSO IN THE VINH AREA, THE VINH LUU HIGHWAY BRIDGE AND THE VINH RAILROAD BRIDGE WERE ALSO STRUCK. HOWEVER, RESULTS WERE NOT OBSERVED DUE TO HEAVY SMOKE. SORTIES AGAINST SEVEN OTHER TARGETS WERE CANCELLED DUE TO POOR WEATHER OVER THE TARGET AREA.

-- ARMED RECONNAISSANCE STRIKES AGAINST TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY OVER NORTH VIETNAM RESULTED IN THE DESTRUCTION OF OR DAMAGE TO THE FOLLOWING: 23 TRUCKS; 13 BRIDGES; 20 WATERBORNE LOGISTIC CRAFT; 7 REVETMENTS; 1 POL TANK; 1 BULLDOZER AND 2 BUILDINGS. IN ADDITION, 23 SECONDARY FIRES AND EXPLOSIONS WERE OBSERVED.

-- SEVENTEEN B-52 SORTIES OVER NORTH VIETNAM STRUCK TRUCK PARKS, SUPPLY AREAS, MILITARY STRUCTURES, POL SUPPLIES AND TANKS, AND AMMUNITION STORAGE AREAS NORTHWEST AND SOUTHWEST OF KONG HOI.

-- IN SOUTH VIETNAM SOME 410 TACTICAL AND GUNSHIP SORTIES WERE FLOWN, RESULTING IN DAMAGE OR DESTRUCTION OF 227 STRUCTURES, 16 GUNS, 5 TANKS AND 8 TRUCKS. ALSO REPORTED WERE 171 SECONDARY FIRES AND EXPLOSIONS.

-- ENEMY SAMS DOWNED THREE U.S. AIRCRAFT ON AUGUST 17. ONE AVY F-4 WAS LOST NEAR HAIPHONG AND ANOTHER IN THE VICINITY OF NAM DINH. THE PILOT LOST NEAR NAM DINH WAS CAPTURED. A USAF F-4 WAS DOWNED BY A SAM ABOUT 30 MILES NORTHEAST OF HANOI LAST NIGHT. SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS CONTINUE FOR THE PILOT. A TOTAL OF 29 U.S. AIRCRAFT HAVE NOW BEEN DOWNED BY SA-2 MISSILES SINCE MARCH 30. SOME 11 MIGS WERE NOTED AIRBORNE DURING YESTERDAY'S STRIKES OVER NORTH VIETNAM, BUT NO ENGAGEMENTS WERE REPORTED.

-- IN NAVAL SURFACE OPERATIONS, SIX DESTROYERS CONDUCTED HARASSMENT AND INTERDICTION MISSIONS AGAINST TARGETS IN NORTH VIETNAM. THE DONG GIAP TRANSSHIPMENT POINT NEAR HA TINH AND THE DONG HOI ARMY BARRACKS WERE STRUCK, BUT RESULTS WERE UNOBSERVED.

-- OTHER NAVAL SHIPS COMBINED WITH USN TACTICAL AIRCRAFT IN A 4-HOUR STRIKE AGAINST COASTAL DEFENSE AND AAA SITES ON HON LA ISLAND. GUN DAMAGE RESULTS INCLUDED 30 WATERBORNE LOGISTIC CRAFT DESTROYED; TWO COASTAL DEFENSE SITES DAMAGED AND SEVERAL SECONDARY EXPLOSIONS.

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LNGQ

-- SURVEILLANCE OF THE PRC MERCHANT SHIP ANCHORED NEAR HON LA ISLAND CONTINUES WITH NO OFF-LOADING ACTIVITY OBSERVED.

-- THE NUMBER OF FOREIGN MERCHANT SHIPS IN NORTH VIETNAMESE PORTS AND ANCHORAGES REMAINS AT 31. THERE HAS BEEN NO EVIDENCE OF ANY ATTEMPT TO TRANSIT OR SWEEP THE MINEFIELDS SINCE THEIR ACTIVATION. THERE ARE STILL 9 SHIPS CARRYING CARGO ESTIMATED TO BE DESTINED FOR NORTH VIETNAM.

POLITICAL/DIPLOMATIC

LE DUC THO VISITS MOSCOW

NORTH VIETNAMESE NEGOTIATOR LE DUC THO GOT VIP TREATMENT DURING HIS AUGUST 16-18 STOPOVER IN MOSCOW. ON THE 17TH, HE MET WITH POLITBURO MEMBER KIRILENKO, WHO APPEARS TO BE IN CHARGE WHILE BREZHNEV AND KOSYGIN ARE OUT OF TOWN ON VACATION, AND PARTY SECRETARY KATUSHEV, WHO FIGURES PROMINENTLY IN EVERY HIGH-LEVEL MEETING BETWEEN THE SOVIETS AND NORTH VIETNAMESE. THO MAY HAVE BRIEFED THE SOVIETS ON HIS RECENT PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH DR. KISSINGER.

IN AN UNUSUAL MOVE, TASS PUBLISHED A STATEMENT ON THE MEETINGS. NORMALLY, SOVIET MEDIA DO NOT COMMENT SUBSTANTIVELY ON MOSCOW'S EXCHANGES WITH HANOI'S NEGOTIATORS; THE FACT THAT THE MEDIA DID SO IN THIS CASE SEEMS TO REFLECT MOSCOW'S SENSITIVITY TO CURRENT SPECULATION ABOUT SOVIET-NORTH VIETNAMESE RELATIONS.

THE STATEMENT ITSELF WAS FAIRLY ROUTINE. THO REPORTEDLY EXPRESSED GRATITUDE TO THE USSR FOR ITS "CONSTANT AND EFFECTIVE" AID AND REITERATED NORTH VIETNAM'S RESOLVE TO CONTINUE THE STRUGGLE ON EVERY FRONT -- MILITARY, DIPLOMATIC, AND POLITICAL. KIRILENKO CONDEMNED U.S. BOMBING AND MINING IN NORTH VIETNAM AND PROMISED CONTINUED ECONOMIC AND MILITARY AID UNTIL THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ACHIEVE VICTORY IN THEIR "JUST CAUSE." KIRILENKO ALSO EXPLICITLY ENDORSED THE "CONSTRUCTIVE" PEACE PROPOSALS OF THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS. THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE TALKS WAS DESCRIBED AS "FRIENDLY AND CORDIAL," IN CONTRAST TO SOME PREVIOUS MEETINGS WHERE THE TWO SIDES WERE SAID TO HAVE REACHED UNANIMITY OF VIEWS.

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